Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The New York "Commercial Advertiser" is making war upon the Pinkerton police system. It thinks that the Pinkerton army is a menace to self-government. This is absurd, since the private police would not exist in the absence of any demand for it on the part of the "self-governing" Americans. What is the difference between private police officers and private watchmen? It is true that, if governments protected men well and enforced justice, there would be no need of private police; the fact, then, that private police are needed shows that governments fail in the task of protection.

Certain communications in newspapers suggesting methods of preventing the illicit opening of letters move the "Truth Seeker" to make the following remarks: "It is a new thing in this country for citizens to cast about and exercise their ingenuity in devising ways to defeat the prying impertinences of post-office inquisitors. The evil is upon us, however, and it seems to be increasing. The apprehension that letters are pried into, particularly in small country offices, is very widespread, and seems justified by the general rottenness of our post-office department. The 'Truth Seeker' was the first one to protest against such violations of personal rights and liberties in this country. Liberty abused is still better than the best despotism, and an inspected mail-bag is a sign of the vilest despotism. Encroachments upon the liberties of speech, of the press, and of the mails must be sturdily resisted. Without these liberties there is no liberty." It is probably *not* the case that the "Truth Seeker" was the first one to protest against the abuse in question; but this is a matter of little importance. What is both true and important is that the "Truth Seeker" supports the monopoly feature of the postal service and hasn't the sense to perceive the superiority of private competitive mails. It talks about liberty while acquiescing in the suppression of competition in the letter-carrying business.

At a meeting of the Chicago Trades Assembly a suggestion was made to the effect that a destitute child would be unknown in that city if each workman would devote one day's wages annually to the treasury of the Waifs' Mission. In response, the Trades Assembly declared that the demand should be for justice, not charity, and that the Waifs' Mission should be supported by taxation. The Chicago "Herald" properly lectures the Trades Assembly upon "the error, common enough nowadays, of looking upon government as a Lady Bountiful and expecting it to do for the people the things they should do for themselves." But the "Herald" goes on to give utterance to a much more common and graver, though less obvious, error. It says: "In this country there is no such thing as a government separate and distinct from the people. The people are the government, and whatever it distributes with one hand must first be taken from them with the other. It is forgetfulness of this idea on the part of the masses that enables our protected trusts and combines to delude so many Americans with their specious arguments in favor of the protective tariff. Government here creates nothing. All it has comes from the people, and the more it gives to one element the more all elements have to pay." The error here is in the assumption that in this country the people are the government. The government is a body of men representing a part of the people. Note, moreover, in what a curious contradiction the "Herald's" assumption entangles it. If the people are the government, then the Trades Assembly, in saying that the government should support the Waifs' Missions, means that the people should support them, since government and people are synonyms, and the "Herald's" rebuke loses all its significance. Again, if the people are the government, then the people enact the tariff laws, and it is absurd for the "Herald" to denounce the protected trusts. The case against tariffs and government philanthropy would be much stronger if the "Herald" started out with the conception of government as something separate and distinct from the people.

In Liberty of Sept. 12 the misconceptions of the editor of the "Open Court" in regard to Anarchism and Socialism were pointed out and corrected. His definitions were shown to be arbitrary, and his criticisms groundless. Now comes Miss Voltairine de Cleyre with what she imagines to be a defence of Anarchism, and the editor of the "Open Court" gladly makes room for it, thinking, no doubt, that a few more such pleas and defensive victories, and Anarchism will be lost. Miss de Cleyre's defence is worse than Dr. Carus's criticism. Listen to her. In the first place, Anarchism is "a conception of society without officials, police, military, bayonets, prisons, and the thousand and one other symbols of force which mark our present development,—a dream of the day when 'each having mended one, all will be mended.'" This may be Miss de Cleyre's Anarchism, but it is not the Anarchism which Liberty advocates. It is the Christian millennium, but it has little in common with the scientific Anarchism which is becoming a factor in social progress. Anarchism does not exclude prisons, officials, military, or other symbols of force. It merely demands that non-invasive men shall not be made the victims of such symbols of force. Anarchism is not the reign of love, but the reign of justice. It does not signify the abolition of force-symbols, but the application of force to real invaders. In the second place, we are told that Anarchism would not, if it could, sweep codes at once from existence, "well knowing that, as long as men are incapable of receiving the authority of 'the inward must,' they are incapable of living without statutes." What nonsense, what confusion! It certainly would, if it but could, sweep from existence all statutes inconsistent with equal liberty. It would not allow crime to go unpunished, but it would certainly put a stop to the prohibitions of legitimate activities. The reason why Anarchism would not sweep *all* statutes from existence is that not all statutes are violations of the principle laid down by Anarchism. It would retain those which are essential to the maintenance of social life, while it would wipe out all those that are anti-social in their workings and effects. There are Anarchists and Anarchists, remarks Miss de Cleyre, and Liberty thanks her for that appropriate suggestion. If there are such Anarchists as Miss de Cleyre, Liberty prays to be saved from them. But perhaps Miss de Cleyre wrote her article hastily and impulsively, without due reflection. I should rejoice to learn that such is the case.

Business and Politics.

[New York Nation.]

You cannot, in a country of universal suffrage, have pure politics as long as prices are raised and lowered by legislation at every session of the legislature. This system would eventually corrupt a community of angels. As long as the business man looks to congress to provide a good market for his goods, he will inevitably invest money in the high-tariff party, just as he would invest in a mill or in a coal mine, and he will give the money to the man who, he thinks, will put it where "it will do most good." That man will always be a Quay and nothing but a Quay. The Quay will have under him a swarm of Delamaters, Wanamakers, Bardsleys, and Marshes to do his bidding, and blow his trumpet, and defend his methods. Politics, in short, will, under such conditions, inevitably become "business" in the very lowest sense of that term. The party having won the government by promising to enable everybody who gave money for the canvass to make a handsome profit on what they gave, the underlings who gave not money but work will claim the salaries of the public offices as *their* reward and they will get them. They will not listen to the "trust" doctrine from people who openly acknowledge that they themselves are in politics mainly and solely to increase their own incomes. And gradually the whole machinery of government will come to be looked on simply as the machinery of a mill is looked on, as investment of capital to be returned with interest, profit, and something for superintendence and wear and tear. Everything will be considered marketable and divisible among the stockholders—treasury funds, offices, contracts, pensions, subsidies; and the work of the Quays will be mainly the work of deciding who got in on "the ground floor" and who on upper stories.

It is from this view of the province of legislation that the first step to treasury-looting is taken. The spoils view of offices is simply the second step. The looters are always members of the new "historical school" of political economy. They all hold to the paternal theory of government, and think the State cannot do too much for all its inhabitants, and especially for those of them who keep the keys of the public safe. No high or noble view of politics can long survive the practice of annually estimating what effect your vote will have on your bank account. The great capitalist takes a little longer to succumb to it than the poor laborer whose vote he purchases, but he succumbs in the end, and hires a Quay to manage the political department of his business. The newspapers, too, speedily catch the contagion. There must be something for them in politics as well as for everybody else, and the manna reaches them most palatably in the form of "ads." For "ads" they denounce the "British free trader"; for "ads" they certify to the honesty of all the able rogues and truthfulness of all the useful liars, and for "ads" draw the veil of silence over the unfortunate ones who have been found out. It is all "business."

A Sermon in Figures.

[New York Sun.]

Only one landed proprietor in England possesses more than 100,000 acres in one county, there being three in Ireland and fourteen in Scotland. In England the Duke of Northumberland is proprietor of 181,616 acres in Northumberland. In Ireland Mr. Richard Burridge is proprietor of 160,152 acres in Galway, the Marquis of Conyngham 129,846 acres in Donegal, and the Marquis of Sligo 122,902 acres in Mayo. In Scotland the Duke of Argyll owns 168,315 acres in Argyle, the Earl of Breadalbane 234,166 acres in Perth and 204,192 acres in Argyle; Mr. Evan Baillie of Dockfour, 141,148 acres in Inverness; the Duke of Buccleuch, 253,179 acres in Dumfries and 104,461 in Roxburgh; Mr. Donald Cameron of Lochiel, 109,574 acres in Inverness; the Earl of Dalhousie, 136,602 acres in Forfar; the Duke of Fife, 139,829 acres in Aberdeen; the Duke of Hamilton, 100,210 acres in Bute; Sir George Macpherson-Grant, 103,372 acres in Inverness; Sir James Matheson, 406,070 acres in Ross; the Duke of Richmond, 159,952 acres in Banff; Sir Charles Ross, 110,445 acres in Ross; the Earl of Seafield, 160,224 acres in Inverness; and last, but not least, the Duke of Sutherland, with no less than 1,176,454 acres in Sutherland, so that his Grace is possessed of very nearly the whole county.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Usury and the State.

Leaving Mr. Tucker to deal with the main issue between Liberty and the "Freidenker," I wish only briefly to consider some of the minor statements and assertions put forth by Mr. Boppe.

In the first place, I would repel the sneer at Robert Reitzel. Reitzel is the last man to write anything to win the favor and applause of anybody. There are few journalists who are so true to themselves in all they write as he is. And while he does not need the applause of the Communists, he knows very well that he cannot gain that of the Anarchists by "empty and cheap revolutionary declamation." Moreover, such declamation does not by any means constitute the staple of "Der Arme Teufel," as one might infer from Mr. Boppe's insinuations.

In the second place, if Mr. Boppe did not misrepresent Liberty as an organ of Communism, and is consequently not guilty of the gross ignorance charged against him by Robert Reitzel, his assertion that "the just reward of labor," "the abolition of usury," and "the cessation of the exploitation of man by man," demanded by the Anarchists, cannot be realized except on "the basis of the Communistic principle and by means of a social organization with a binding force transcending any claims made by the State of today" is not one that an intelligent man would make. If he had but a faint glimmer of the subject of Anarchism, on which he writes with such an air of confidence, it would have been utterly impossible for him to make the above statement. This is not the first time he has made it, either; he said the same thing in about the same words three or four years ago. He was then set right on these matters several times, but seems to have taken no notice thereof. He writes just as if his objections had never been met. It is very trying to one's patience for this reason to have to deal with him.

It can be very readily shown that the realization of the just reward of labor, the abolition of usury, and the cessation of the exploitation of man by man do not involve the authoritarian implications charged by Mr. Boppe. It is plain that with the abolition of usury labor will come to its just reward and the exploitation of man by man will cease. I need waste no words in elucidation of this point. All I need to show, consequently, is that the abolition of usury does not presuppose "a social organization with a binding force far transcending any claims made by the State of today." This is done by simply defining usury. What is usury? Usury is the burden of interest, profits, and rent resting on labor, not by virtue of the nature of things, but by virtue of the legal restrictions placed on the business of furnishing a medium of exchange, on the exchange of products and services, and on the cultivation and occupation of vacant land. In order to abolish usury, then, and thereby help labor to its own and put an end to the exploitation of man by man, it is only necessary to remove the aforesaid legal restrictions, now enjoyed by the parasitic classes and constituting the sum and substance of the State. But the removal of those legal restrictions certainly does not mean a strengthening of the power that created and upholds them, but a crippling of it. Or, to explain great things by small, would Mr. Boppe claim that the abolition of the present tariff, for instance, can be realized only on "the Communistic principle and by means of a social organization with binding powers far transcending any claims made by the State of today"? But such an assertion would be just as sensible as his assertion about the abolition of usury, etc. Far from entailing more rigid social arrangements, the abolition of usury implies, on the contrary, the overthrow of the positive institution of the State and the inauguration of the era of liberty.

Thus it is seen that the Anarchists are not involved in the "absurd contradictions" charged against them by their would-be critic, but that his ignorance concerning their true position is simply appalling.

G. S.

In Addition.

Mr. Tucker chooses to doubt my veracity and insinuates that my statement of the manner in which I came to interpret his remarks about prerogative and right as I did was pure fiction. That I had really forgotten the conversation he tells of at the time I wrote the criticism of his remark, he cannot bring himself to believe. Against this indirect accusation of lying I shall not defend myself. But I may point out that this readiness to suspect opponents of all manner of vice tends powerfully to support the charge I parenthetically brought against Mr. Tucker, — the charge, *not* of dishonesty in discussion (which I have never thought myself or others justified in preferring), but of disinclination to take the expressions of his opponents in their best sense. A little reflection would have induced Mr. Tucker to accept my assurances and explanations as true, for it is plain that I had absolutely nothing to gain from the "trick" of defining prerogative as privilege and ignoring the other definition. My case was not made a bit stronger by this construction, since I frankly acknowledged my belief in the superiority and independence of rights. I challenge Mr. Tucker to find any probable motive for my selection of that definition of prerogative upon which I based only a minor criticism other than that stated in my explanation. Would my argument have suffered if I had selected the other definition? Not at all. I ask the reader to turn to my article and omit the third paragraph and the first half of the opening sentence of the fourth. This omission, he will find, will not injure the argument. As to that conversation, it was easy for Mr. Tucker's explanations of his objection to vanish from my mind, because, as I now recollect, they failed to settle the important question which was then greatly troubling me, — the question, namely, whether Mr. Tucker agreed or disagreed with Spencer's ethical views. Not till the appearance of Mr. Tucker's reply to my criticism, in which he reprinted and endorsed the nonsense of '87, was that matter made clear to me. This disposes of the second insinuation that I am rash in rushing into difficulties.

But how could I doubt Mr. Tucker's faithfulness to the egoistic philosophy? the reader may ask. What reason had I for suspecting any change in *his* position? I answer that I had abundant reason, and that I did seriously doubt his fidelity. I really believed that, like myself, he was trying to blend the old with new doctrines, and that he no longer adhered to the egoistic doctrine in its bald, naked, brutal, revolutionary form. I am ready to produce the evidence which has seemed to me to justify that belief. I can show that scores of editorials, all printed within the last eighteen months, have been, some in spirit, some in letter, and some in both, distinctly and emphatically opposed to the enlightened-self-interest-the-foundation-of-social order doctrine and the men-must-become-conscienceless-criminals gospel. As Mr. Tucker is responsible for my editorial opinions, and as he is not dull, I naturally inferred that his silence signified acquiescence. Other readers of Liberty, less confident of the possibility of Mr. Tucker's redemption, have repeatedly commented upon the inconsistency of many editorial utterances with the notions upheld in Liberty of '87 and admitted that there must be *some* explanation of Mr. Tucker's course other than his mere failure to detect the inconsistency. A word now from Mr. Tucker, and the deadly parallel column shall be called into requisition by me.

And here I am brought to the reproach of tardiness and reluctance conveyed in Mr. Tucker's remark that it would have been better and fairer (by the way, in the absence of contract, the word fairness has no meaning; it certainly was not nominated in the bond that I should make a formal recantation of anything I might relinquish) if I had made the retraction at the time the revolution occurred. But there has not been any sudden revolution, and at no time was a formal and official renunciation possible. The change has been gradual, very slow; each particular variation was slight and excited no alarm. Whenever it appeared needful or desirable, the old concept was widened just enough to admit the new elements of truth, and this process went on, transforming and modifying the old concept in this evolutionary way without hindrance or shock, until the point was reached where a repudiation of the original concept seemed superfluous. To be sure, a formal recantation would have opened the eyes of those inattentive or unintelligent observers of this evolutionary process whom Mr. Tucker pities as the innocent victims of my "misleading" attitude. But as a believer in the survival of the fittest, I cannot be expected to take great pains with the unintelligent and inattentive, while to those who have followed my writings intelligently, the formal retraction which I made in the last issue announced nothing new, — and they never needed any formal retraction.

Here it seems appropriate to remind Mr. Tucker that his conversion to what he calls egoism was by no means coincident with his first appearance in public life and assumption of editorial functions. Yet I do not remember to have seen any formal renunciation of the ethical views which he held when he started Liberty, notwithstanding the rather revolutionary manner in which the change occurred. I do not think fairness required such a renunciation even in his case; still less did fairness require it in my case. I may add that the revolution in Mr. Tucker's thought did not make him a modest man. He was as top-lofty before the revolution from the standpoint which he ridicules now as he is now from the standpoint which he indignantly denounced then. He was as confident of his superiority when he expressed his supreme contempt for men who never feel righteous indignation as he is now when he tabooes words that imply blame or ethical approbation. Change of opinion does not make men more modest, although it makes them careful, charitable, and tolerant. Those ought to be modest who never change their opinions, for such "mental stability" is the result of profound ignorance.

Because I said that I still call myself a rational egoist, Mr. Tucker is inclined to charge me with shuffling. He is mistaken. I know what egoism is, as he will concede, and I have the advantage of him in knowing what my present position is. Hence when I say that I am still a rational egoist I do so because it is true, not because of any lack of courage. Notwithstanding my words of caution in my last article, Mr. Tucker persists in confounding my present position with the position which amused me in '87. I may resolve to write a brief and clear statement of my present position showing that it is not anti-egoistic at all in its essence, although it rejects the egoistic terminology as unscientific and repudiates the logic and arguments by which the egoists arrive at their conclusions as metaphysical and fallacious. Perhaps Mr. Tucker will see then that I know what I mean, though he doesn't. Perhaps even he may then see light in my direction, and renounce his present views. I am sure, at any rate, that no fear of inducing a general belief in his mental instability will deter him from following the new light. By the way, I am not at all astonished to hear that Mr. Tucker has long held the belief in my mental instability. I have long held a certain belief in regard to *his* mentality which led me to suspect that in his eyes I must be lacking in mental stability. That which I pride myself on as an intellectual merit must necessarily be regarded by him as intellectual demerit. But I do not intend to imitate Mr. Tucker and catalogue his intellectual qualities. In view of our relations, I deem such a proceeding extremely improper.

In conclusion, I wish to ask for an elucidation of his closing sentence. Because I have abandoned his conception of egoism, does it follow that I must sooner or later abandon Anarchism? Mr. Tucker well knows that there are clear-sighted and philosophical Anarchists who do not agree with his ethical notions; and he knows that in my review of "Justice" I have shown that Spencer's ethical philosophy, which I accept, logically leads to Anarchism. My Anarchism is ethical, philosophical, and scientifically defensible, for it is based on the general doctrine of Evolution and on the facts of moral evolution. I consider any Anarchism not so based unworthy of serious attention. I venture to express my assurance that my presentation of Anarchism would meet favorable consideration in the scientific circles where Mr. Robinson's method of argumentation would elicit only expressions of supreme contempt.

V. Y.

Mr. Yarros does well in refusing to defend himself against my impeachment of his veracity in this matter. There is no defence open to him. In fact, his present article contributes crushing evidence that the impeachment was warranted. If I had had a trace of

doubt before, it would vanish now. One word, however, before passing to this evidence. I am challenged to name Mr. Yarros's motive in crediting me with a use of the word prerogative which made my language absurd in the extreme. I have already named it.—the desire to be or appear smart and cunning. That the paragraph in which he did this added nothing to his argument I saw plainly. It was perfectly superfluous. But he could not resist the temptation to make it appear that I had said something excessively silly. Having rushed into this difficulty, he found himself obliged, in order to extricate himself, to invent the plea that he had forgotten our conversation. The fact that this conversation closely concerned, even though it may have failed to settle, a question that was greatly troubling him, far from affording a satisfactory explanation of his pretended forgetfulness, only makes it the more certain that he could not have forgotten it.

But the audacity of this pretence pales beside that of the ridiculous claim which follows it. When Mr. Yarros asserts that he supposed I had changed my egoistic views as announced in 1887, he utters pure bosh, unadulterated humbug. He supposed nothing of the kind, still less had any reason to suppose so. He declares that his supposition of my conversion dates from eighteen months ago. Now, he knows very well that less than twelve months ago I delivered an address before the Unitarian ministers at Salem which was afterwards printed in these columns and in which I proclaimed the doctrine of egoism in what he now calls "its bald, naked, brutal, revolutionary form." He knows very well that five or six months ago I gave unqualified editorial endorsement to the admirable discourse by Mr. Pentecost which gave rise to the "Twentieth Century" discussion between Mr. Pentecost and Mr. Yarros. He knows very well that his criticism upon Mr. Pentecost's lecture would have appeared in Liberty instead of the "Twentieth Century" (though probably in a less definite form), if I had not unwittingly headed him off by my paragraph of editorial approval. He knows very well that it is one of my most ardent desires to publish in English "Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum" by Max Stirner, the "brutality" of whose egoism has never been equalled unless by Mr. Yarros himself. He knows very well that I have repeatedly made alterations in the proofs of the "scores of editorials" written by him within the last eighteen months, in order that they might not clash with my "brutal" views. All these things show conclusively that I had not changed my opinion, and that he knew that I had not. Against this his only evidence is the appearance in these columns during the last eighteen months of editorial contributions from his pen which he declares to be antagonistic in spirit or in letter or in both to the views which we shared in 1887 and which I still hold. What the spirit of these articles was I do not pretend to say. The animus was Mr. Yarros's, and if I failed to perceive it, it was because he so skilfully concealed it. As for the letter, if it can be shown to be inconsistent with "brutal" egoism as distinguished from "rational" egoism (and I do not believe that it can), the explanation is easy. Not long after the discussion of 1887, Mr. Yarros paid a visit to New York. He came back with the discovery that on the question of egoism there was "no difference between Liberty and the Kellys." This discovery he has since repeatedly insisted upon to his Boston comrades. He never gave them to understand that in his judgment Liberty's views had altered, but only that he had found out that the Kellys were advocating the same ideas under a different phraseology. It is in the light of these declarations made by Mr. Yarros in private that I have interpreted whatever he has written on the subject for Liberty. And as it is always my desire to afford Mr. Yarros all the freedom of editorial expression that a due regard for consistency will permit, I have sometimes allowed him to say things in a form that I would not have chosen, but which seemed to me capable of being harmonized with my position by a liberal construction of his phraseology; only amending or omitting when he seemed to be stretching the English language beyond the most liberal allowance. My liberality is now made the basis of a claim that I seemed to have changed my opinions. The case is this. Mr. Yarros had informed his comrades that he considered C the same as B. His comrades were astonished, but took him at his word. When he said C, they concluded that he meant B. When he wrote editorially for Liberty, I could not let him say C, because the public did not know that he meant B. But if he wrote something that was neither quite B nor quite C, but that could be construed into a tolerable B, I generally allowed it to pass. In consequence I am now told by Mr. Yarros that he supposed I had abandoned B for C. I repeat: this is unadulterated humbug.

Not to take up too much space with further refutation of such stuff and nonsense, I will content myself with saying briefly that, when two persons enter upon social relations, fairness is always mutually expected as a result of the tacit contract that exists in such cases; that my fundamental opinions have undergone no revolution since I began the publication of Liberty; that I have not observed any increase of care, charity, or tolerance in Mr. Yarros since he last changed his opinion; that, until he answers my argument that egoism excludes obligation, his claim that he is a rational egoist will remain unfounded; that all talk of new evidence is vain unless such evidence is produced; that it is not improper to catalogue my intellectual qualities, but that it *is* improper, after cataloguing them, to disclaim any intention of doing so; and that Mr. Yarros seems more likely to abandon Anarchism after abandoning "brutal" egoism, first, because the belief in his instability is strengthened, and, second, because there is a logical connection between the two. I hold, with the Mr. Yarros of 1887, that there can be no harmonious relations between people until they dismiss the spooks of right and duty, and that, since Anarchism is a theory of the foundation of harmonious relations, it can be logically held only by those who have dismissed these spooks. As to the tendency of Spencer's ethical philosophy I have been enlightened this very day by the arrival of an elaborate pamphlet on "Evolutionary Ethics" written by one of Spencer's English disciples. According to him, in Spencer's ethics the individual does not struggle directly for happiness, but to achieve the conditions of happiness (a distinction without a difference, it seems to me, since the motive is the same in either case), and the disciple considers that such a struggle involves individualism but excludes Anarchism. What sort of individualism it involves is best shown in the disciple's ardent advocacy of a law forbidding weak and incapable persons to beget children. This is fairly illustrative of the tendency of the moralist to finally resort to force to compel the practice of his particular brand of morality.

T.

Some Considerations By the Way.

Wisconsin has the honor of having a literary governor,—author of "Peck's Bad Boy." This gentleman, not unknown to fame, is, this dry and dreary fall, making the rounds of all the county fairs, giving each in its turn it proper "boom." There is no politics in it. Of course no. But if there were, the Republicans claim they would reap the largest gain. For, when a man goes about saying he "would not give the snap of his finger (or words to that effect) for a white boy that wouldn't steal watermelons, or a darkey that wouldn't steal a chicken," he must as a natural consequence lower himself in the esteem of all good, law-abiding citizens. And not only does this Democrat-governor talk thus wildly; he has actually read (when stuck for something else or better to say) pages if not whole chapters from that book he wrote, and which, it is the opinion of all sound Republicans, should have been seized long ere this, if not by Anthony Comstock, Esq., then by whoever else had at heart the welfare of these United States,—seized and utterly and forever exterminated! "A book more certain to undermine the character of the American youth was never, to my knowledge, published"—quoth one who stands high hereabouts; stanchest apostle of the G. O. P.!

I turn, and lo, a Democrat,—his face all a grin. "Won't say it loud, partner," he whispering says, "or the whole town'll buy that book. So you don't like Peck's bad boy? Well, I hadn't thought on't thet way myself. It was awful funny when I first read it or heerd my boy a tellin' it. We both hed a right good laff—seems's tho' the kid 'u'd bust. But I hain't noticed thet he's been any the worse for't. Fact, I guess it did him good. Kept him good-natured any way. As I make it out, we don't *allurs* learn by *good* examples. My boy now, says as how *good* boys make him thet tired he'd rather go drown himself than be one. But, 'tween you an' me an' the whippin' post, he *is* one all the same. Ther's what's her name, in what's his name's book, you know who I mean,—she jest detested good and proper folk—them Pillers o' Society—How I laff'd when I read her sayin's! I jest handed the book to Steve, my boy, an' he nigh split. 'She's a Jim-dandy gal,' says he. 'Pop, you kin jest bet yer bottom dollar on 'er.' Now, ye see boys is boys, neighbor; an' gals is gals. An' you aint goin' ter make old men an' women of 'em 'fore its time. Taint nat'ral. Just give 'em nuff to eat; nuff to wear; lots o' fun; all the schoolin' y' can afford ter; an' lick 'em ef they don't work when y' tell 'em; an' my word for't, ye'll raise a good crop thet'll do y' honor."

The Republican smiled a smile that spoke his disgusted mind and wended his way home from church.

And turning homeward myself, I pondered. What may the world be coming to? A new gospel it would seem is in the air. The grim old world is going to "laff,"—*must* or die. What *dreadful* result will follow I know not. But one thing seems full clear: where laughter goes, there stalks not murder to the gallows nor theft to rot in prison.

I wonder is the issue being made up?

Is Gov. Peck a sort of a pseudo-prophet?

Does he come throwing dirt on the sacred urn that holds the political virtues?

Is he a liberator of some sort?

I only conjecture.

I have never seen him, or even read him. I know him only by an impression that has floated mostly from skies where the immaculate G. O. P. by supposition dwells.

Doubtless we shall not much longer hear of him.

Now the Ohio man has his tin factories running; can set his table with cups, saucers, plates, knives, forks, and spoons all made of tin; why, the nation will turn to and elect its tin-clad presidents, governors, senators, and all. So virtue will be its own reward. The good old party will still supply the pillars, and society will stay firmly upheld. Goodness shall be propagated from generation to generation. A new type will appear. Lowell even found a specimen years ago. (There have always been a few of them.) He described him:—

From the womb he came gravely, a little old man;
While other boys' trowsers demanded the toil
Of the motherly fingers on all kinds of soil,
Red, yellow, brown, black, clayey, gravelly, loamy,
He sat in the corner and read Liri Rome.
He never was known to unbend or to revel once
In base, marbles, hocky, or kick up the devil once;
He was just one of those who excite the benevolence
Of your old prigs who sound the soul's depths with a ledger,
And are on the lookout for some young men to feiger-
Cate, as they call it, who won't be too costly,
And who'll afterward take to the ministry mostly.

I may be doing the G. O. P., as a whole, scant justice, but I know my Republican friends hereabouts would, with this sort of model youth and man, be suited to a T. And I opine there are others.

Against the o'er weening tendency to all sorts of cooked-up goodness, our Gov. Peck and his "bad boy" may come like angels in disguise to live and voice a protest.

S. H. MORSE.

Mrs. Besant Gone.

[G. W. Foote in London Freethinker.]

Mrs. Besant poses as martyr, one who has been ungratefully treated by the Secular party, and is now, as a reward for sixteen years' service, excluded from its platform. This is false to the point of absurdity. The truth is she has excluded herself. After turning her back on Secularism, after renouncing almost every opinion she held in common with Charles Bradlaugh, she now refuses to lecture on our platform when she is invited, unless she is allowed to dictate our policy, and, in face of all this, she stands up in public with an air of injured innocence, and asks the world to look upon her as a victim of Secular bigotry.

That the Christians should echo Mrs. Besant's cry is only natural. They may not love her, but they hate us, and any stick is good enough to beat the Secular dog with. They rail at our "bigotry"—as they call our determination to use our own halls for our own purposes—but they do not offer Mrs. Besant the use of their own pulpits.

On Sunday evening Mrs. Besant ended her discourse by saying, "I would never have left your platform unless I had been compelled. I must take my dismissal if it must be. To you now, and for the rest of this life, I bid farewell." No doubt it was very pathetic. But the pathos was stage pathos. Had she added, as she might have done, "Next Sunday evening I open the winter season of the North West London Branch of your Society," the audience would have laughed in her face.

"I would never have left your platform unless I had been compelled" is a statement that does Mrs. Besant infinite discredit. She has again and again declared that Christian ministers who find themselves at variance with the doctrines of their Churches should go out like honest men. But when she changes her opinions, as she has a perfect right to, she thinks it honorable to stay and embarrass her old colleagues. Instead of leaving them with the declaration, "We once

agreed, now we differ, let us part in peace," she says, in effect, "I will change my opinions as often as I like, and however we differ, I will not leave you unless you cast me out." Such an attitude is utterly unworthy of Mrs. Besant. It is positively mean. It seems to indicate that she is bent on doing all the mischief she can to the Secular party because it has not embraced her Theosophy.

Mrs. Besant affirms that her "exclusion" would not have occurred if Charles Bradlaugh had lived. But this is a mere assumption. The greatest leader has only a certain power over his party. There is a logic of ideas, and a necessity of policy, which no man is able to resist. Nor is it just on Mrs. Besant's part to appeal to the memory of our great lost leader, who experienced many an anxious hour in consequence of her divagations. She knows, as we know, that he was tied up by old recollections and present business engagements. But he liberated himself as far as possible. Mrs. Besant's name was withdrawn from the "National Reformer" and their partnership was dissolved, while Charles Bradlaugh's opinion of Theosophy is fortunately extant in the columns of his journal.

There are other points of Mrs. Besant's "farewell" lecture I wish to refer to. All her talk about her former service to Freethought is beside the point. We know it all as well as she can tell us. We have not to deal with the old Mrs. Besant, but with the present Mrs. Besant; not with Mrs. Besant the Secularist, but with Mrs. Besant the Theosophist; not with the colleague of Charles Bradlaugh, but with the disciple of Helena Blavatsky; not with the lady who impeached and rallied all forms of superstition, but with the lady who carries charms and exhibits them to audiences, the lady who receives messages by electricity without the aid of wires, and letters from Thibet by "supernormal" agency.

Mrs. Besant's statement about these letters froze the audience at the Hall of Science. They felt she was gone from them, and perhaps gone in another sense. This being the silly season, however, when newspapers are gravelled for matter, the "Chronicle" and other journals have snatched at Mrs. Besant's Theosophic rubbish. She has been gravely interviewed about those Mahatma letters. Asked to show one of them, she of course refuses; asked to explain the process of production and transmission, she says the initiates are sworn to secrecy. Surely this is a very convenient refuge for deception or imposture.

Elisha says Elijah's mantle fell upon him. Asked where it is, he says, "In the cupboard." Asked to show it, he says, "I've sworn not to." Asked why he should be believed, he says, "Oh, I'm an honest man." In the same way Mrs. Besant says we ought to believe every monstrous wonder she relates because she never told a lie. Is not this the old theological confidence-trick? Would it excite anything but a smile in a court of law?

For my part, I am bound to believe one of two things; either that Mrs. Besant is the victim of hallucination or of a practical joker, or else that the statement of her receiving the letters that used to come from the Mahatmas to Madame Blavatsky is a deliberate bid for the Theosophic leadership.

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